

OPENING STATEMENT
Congressman Ralph Hall
Hearing on
The Future of Air Traffic Control: The R&D Agenda

Wednesday, March 29, 2006
2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Today, our Chairman and my friend, Ken Calvert has contracted a “bug” and has asked me to fill in for him at this important hearing. I want to welcome our illustrious panel that has convened today to discuss the future of our air transportation system, and specifically the research needed to realize this new system. This is a subject that is of great interest to me and of great importance to the American people.

In 2003, the Congress created the Joint Planning and Development Office (JPDO) as part of the “Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act”. This Committee played a leading role in creating the JPDO and charged it with coordinating the design, research and implementation of a new air traffic control system that will – in the next twenty years – triple our nation’s current capacity to safely move aircraft through the skies. This important joint effort includes participation from the Departments of Transportation, Commerce, Defense, and Homeland Security, and NASA.

Designing a new air transportation management system is an enormously complex and expensive task, thus it’s vitally important that the JPDO effectively manage this program to ensure it will earn continuing support and resources from its member agencies.

Today, we hope to hear how the JPDO – and its early work on the design and development of a Next Generation Air Traffic System (NGATS) (*pronounced en-gatz*) – is progressing. We would like to hear whether this is an effective organization or if we need to consider changes, and if so, what those changes might be.

We have a lot to learn from our witnesses, and we will, I’m sure have many questions to help us understand its current state, and its future challenges. I look forward to hearing from each and everyone of you.

I now recognize the Ranking Democrat, Mr. Udall, for his opening statement.

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